

Application No. 09/553,573
Amendment dated September 12, 2008
Reply to Office Action of June 13, 2008

REMARKS

In the Office Action of June 13, 2008, and in the Advisory Action of September 5, 2008, the Examiner indicated that independent claim 1 and claims 4, 6-8, 11-34, 36-38, 40-42, 101, 141-143, and 169-171 dependent therefrom are allowable.

The Examiner rejected claims 102-130, 132-135, 137-140, 144-168, and 172-174 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,174,311 to Branch et al. ("Branch"); rejected claims 102-130, 132-135, 137-140, 144-168, and 172-174 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,607,424 to Tropiano ("Tropiano"); and rejected claims 102-130, 132-135, 137-140, 144-168, and 172-174 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over French Patent No. 2724312 to Albert ("Albert").

Applicant respectfully maintains that at least for the reasons set forth on pages 18-20 of the Amendment filed on August 13, 2008, Incorporated by reference herein, claims 102-130, 132-135, 137-140, 144-168, and 172-174 are patentable over the art cited by the Examiner. Nonetheless, to expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicant cancelled claims 102-130, 132-135, 137-140, 144-168, and 172-174 without prejudice or disclaimer of their subject matter. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of the cancelled claims without prejudice in a future application.

Applicant submits that claims 1, 4, 6-8, 11-34, 36-38, 40-42, 101, 141-143, and 169-171 are the only claims remaining in this application and have been deemed allowable by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims, as amended, are patentable. Therefore, it is requested that the Examiner reconsider the outstanding rejections in view of the preceding comments. Issuance of a timely Notice of Allowance of the claims is earnestly solicited.

To the extent any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this reply, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees

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required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our
Deposit Account No. 50-3726.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: September 12, 2008

By: 

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